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ABSTRACT

The second language education program of Glastonbury, Connecticut, considered to be an exemplary program in a modest community, is profiled and discussed. Since the 1950s in this system, all students study at least one foreign language, beginning in elementary school. Course offerings, which have changed little since that time, include Spanish, French, Russian, Latin, and Japanese. Factors contributing to the program's success are examined, including the climate in the language teaching profession in the 1950s and beyond, federal policy concerning language education, the long sequence of study extending from elementary through secondary school, program oversight by an interdisciplinary team, teacher qualifications, careful and open program articulation from elementary through secondary grades, a communication-oriented curriculum, and student participation in challenging exchange programs. Strong community commitment and parent participation are also noted. The text is supplemented by excerpts from local newspaper articles and comments by students and educators. (MSE)

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PERSPECTIVE

Council for Basic Education

INTRODUCTION

Education reform in the last decade and a half has had a considerable, if critical, friend in the business community. The U.S.-based international business community, in particular, has been frustrated by American graduates' lack of preparation for the world outside of our national borders.

Of course, the imperative for foreign language study is not new, nor is its logic limited to business needs. The power of other languages to open up our horizons and stretch our minds is not easily overestimated. Yet relatively few communities have supported excellent foreign language programs with the same vigor as, say, strong math or science programs.

We were intrigued and encouraged, therefore, by the success of the Glastonbury, Connecticut language program. In many ways, Glastonbury is an average community. Its population is just under 28,000, its income level is middle class, average class size is 21, and average per-pupil expenditure is $6423. Only 1% of its students is identified as "gifted and talented." CBE set out to discover how the community has sustained and grown an excellent foreign language program since 1957.

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Christopher T. Cross
President
Council for Basic Education

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THE CASE FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The Glastonbury Language Program

by Christine Brown

On October 5, 1957 the Soviet Union launched a small satellite into orbit around the earth. As it became clearer to scientists, diplomats, and politicians that the United States had missed an important development in Soviet space technology, political reverberations began to affect every sector of American education. Following the launching of Sputnik came a period of intense scrutiny and planning in the fields of science, technology, mathematics, and foreign language education. Sputnik was the shot heard 'round the world—a wake-up call for American educators who had been complacent in the defense and technological edge that they thought the United States had gained after World War II. How could the Soviets have launched a satellite and the United States intelligence research community didn't know this was going on?

In a strongly-worded editorial in the November 26, 1957 New York Times, the newspaper asserted: "News that American scientists and engineers are less than adequately informed about current progress in Soviet science and technology must be regarded as disturbing. Americans have known for some time that the Soviet Union maintained a comprehensive service for obtaining, translating, and disseminating to Soviet personnel the published reports of foreign researchers, including particularly our own. But obviously we have not been paying that kind of attention, and some disconcerting accounts have already appeared of the price we have paid in research duplication and lost time." Quite simply, our fault lay not in our technological capacity nor in our mathematical or scientific reasoning, but in the inability of Americans to communicate effectively in other languages. In the last forty years there have been countless examples of total misses, near misses, or at a minimum, nationally embarrassing situations in which Americans have found themselves both at home or abroad. From the launching of an advanced satellite technology, to the public embarrassment of a President whose "warmth in his heart for the Polish people" was translated at his first public speech in Poland as "lust for the people," Americans have struggled with the

See Sputnik

Have your seen Sputnik? Mr. and Mrs. Howard T. O'Connell of 1371 Neipsic R. were among early risers on Monday morning to take up the skywatch. According to Mr. O'Connell, the third stage rocket, which precedes the Russian space satellite, appeared in the sky at about 6:10 a.m. in the north northwest about 60 degrees from the horizon, trailing a stream of white vapor. He said it took about three minutes to cross the sky and disappeared on the eastern horizon. How did it feel to see this first man-made star, or at least its rocket? "It was a great thrill," said Mr. O'Connell, "and I must add, most awesome."

Glastonbury Citizen, October 17, 1957

Foreign Policy Association Discusses Local Education

Members of the Junior Foreign Policy Association presented a panel discussion at a meeting last week of the Buttonball PTA. The discussion compared Russian education with American education, and made several suggestions for our local school system, such as stricter discipline, less repetition of subject matter and higher salaries for teachers.

Points of Russian education considered superior to American were: More material is covered in ten years of schooling in Russia than is accomplished in twelve years here. Prestige and salaries of Russian teachers are excellent and discipline is better.

For the local education scene the panel recommended starting science sooner in the lower grades, stepping up the math program, less repetition from grade to grade.

"Magellan and Columbus, Magellan and Columbus, we keep hearing about them over and over," one panelist said. Music and art courses in high school are too simple, panelists agreed. They would like more theory, and history in the music and art fields. There is need for more emphasis on scholarship.

Glastonbury Citizen December 5, 1957

concept of the usefulness of knowing another language and knowing about another culture. Lulled temporarily into a sense of complacency as English grew in popularity around the world, American businessmen of the 1970s and 1980s still did not sense the deep need for being able to communicate in the language of the customer. What the New York Times said in 1957 is still true: "We cannot pay adequate attention to what our chief competitor is doing if only an infinitesimal fraction of our people know the language."

In the 1990s Americans increasingly come in contact with millions of people who speak languages other than English. Interviews with corporate executives in American business show that there is a shift in attitude about learning languages and about other cultures. Business people are learning what foreign language teachers have advocated for a long time—if you want to communicate with other people, you need to put *your* best foot forward. You cannot always rely on the fact that others have learned English well enough to understand you, the product you are selling, or the future you would like to build on this small planet.

Today, as American education lurches through numerous attempts at change and reform, one small place on the globe has moved in a fairly steady progression over the last forty years. In Glastonbury, Connecticut, since the 1950s *all* students study at least one foreign language beginning in elementary school. Although there have been many national revolutions within language pedagogy since the 1950s, the course offerings in Glastonbury are nearly the same ones that were in place in 1957, when the program began. All third, fourth, and fifth grade students study Spanish, and in grade six, they

Business people are learning that if you want to communicate with other people, you need to put* your *best foot forward.

can add the study of French. In grade seven students may add the study of Russian and in grade nine the study of Latin. Recently instituted is the opportunity to begin Japanese in kindergarten at a magnet school operated with East Hartford, Connecticut. At Glastonbury High School, Japanese is also offered through two-way interactive television with area high schools and Manchester Community-Technical College.

Over the last forty years the students who graduated from Glastonbury High School have gone on to prominent positions in society. Many report that the special opportunity they had in the Glastonbury public school system afforded them entree to

Parents Quizzed on Russian Course for 7th Graders

Parents of all seventh grade pupils in the Glastonbury schools are being asked if they would like to have their children considered for membership in a class in Russian this fall.

Miss Mary P. Thompson, director of curriculum, said that if a class in Russian is started for the seventh grade this fall plans will be made to make it possible for the study of the language to be continued through grade 12. Plans are to have the class meet for a regular class period three times a week.

Last fall, Miss Thompson introduced Spanish in the elementary school grades, starting with third grade. This language study will be continued in the fourth grade this year and French will be given to the third graders. The response from both pupils and families of third graders has been excellent, a faculty member said.

Glastonbury Citizen
July 24, 1958

70 Request Inclusion for Class in Russian

Some 70 responses have been received from parents of 7th grade students saying they would like to have their children considered for membership in a class of Russian this fall, Dr. Laurence G. Paquin, superintendent of schools, said on Monday, the deadline for questionnaires to be returned.

With such enthusiastic response Dr. Paquin said a recommendation for the establishment of a program in instruction in the Russian language will be presented to the Board of Education at their next meeting, August 12th.

If approval is given, a teacher who speaks Russian and has been taking special training in teaching Russian this summer at Yale University will be available for the group.

Glastonbury Citizen
August 1, 1958

Approves Classes in Russian

Classes in Russian for the seventh grade were officially approved by the Board of Education at a lengthy meeting Tuesday night.

Glastonbury Citizen, August 14, 1958

a knowledge about other people, as well as interesting vocations and avocations that they otherwise would not have had the opportunity to select. Former graduates work in every sector of business and industry. Some have been drawn to the diplomatic and intelligence communities, and still others have served in the Armed Services. In the last ten years, students of Russian have had a unique opportunity to use their skills in many joint ventures in Russia and eastern Europe.

Reflections on the Past

As only the third foreign language director in such an historic program, I have often wondered what were the local realities in the 1950s that contributed to the decision to give local support for such a radical educational innovation? There is no single, simple answer—a number of factors were necessary for the nurturing of a language program that has spanned four decades and in the 1996-97 school year covers ten grade levels.

First, it appears that the climate within the foreign language profession of the late 1950s promoted a new philosophy about language learning. Prominent language researchers and teachers at major universities (the most prominent being Yale University in Connecticut, a forty-five minute ride from Glastonbury) were talking about the Army language method that had been so effective in teaching American service personnel following World War II. The Army language method was a short term, intensive approach providing Americans traveling abroad the ability to communicate with native speakers of the language. Unlike the focus of the previous decade on reading as the ultimate use for language learning, the Army language method focused on the abilities of listening and speaking.

At the same time these changes were occurring within the profession, major changes were going on in American education in response to the perception that the United States was lagging technologically behind the Soviet Union. The National Defense Education Act was launched—a presidential initiative aimed at providing funding for educational ventures that would put the United States in a technologically competitive position with the Soviet Union.

In the National Defense Education Act, there were provisions for expanding language programs around the country. Under the direction of forward-thinking administrators, the Glastonbury Public Schools requested government funding to take the Army language method and turn it into a program that could be used effectively in schools throughout the nation. The Audio-Lingual Methodology and materials were developed in Glastonbury with the seed funding from the United States government.

Mary Thompson

When Miss Mary Thompson told her brothers she had accepted a position as Director of Curriculum and Instruction in the Glastonbury School System they laughed goodnaturedly, in the manner of all brothers and said, "The title sounds great. What do you do?"

The phase of her job which she considers most important is that of assisting Dr. Paquin in the selection of new teachers; for the ultimate test of a school system lies in the job done by the teacher in the classroom. Both she and Dr. Paquin believe in staffing a school with people of varied backgrounds so that the search for new teachers must be country-wide.

At times the introduction of a new program in the schools requires that all teachers involved be brought up to date on the subject through in-service training meetings.

The elementary school Spanish program, begun last year under Miss Thompson's direction provides an example of this. Though all the participating teachers had studied Spanish at some previous time, they met with Miss Thompson one day a week throughout the year to discuss methods of teaching a foreign language to young children. Such in-service meetings, which will be held as needed in other fields, often develop latent talents. Miss Thompson reports that one teacher whose Spanish had long been unused became a very apt "pupil" herself and made unusual progress in studying the language. The children in her room will, of course, profit by this proficiency which might have remained unknown.

Glastonbury Citizen
September 11, 1958

Spanish for Third Graders Taught With New Recordings

"Buenos Dias, Mommy." This may soon be the morning greeting Glastonbury mothers get from their 6-year old daughters. What justification for putting Spanish, let us say, next to the three R's? When will the children use their new language?

"They have more chance to speak a foreign language than you think," replied Miss Thompson. "An astronomical number of children have been to Europe, Mexico, and other countries with their families. When they get to high school age they have the chance to go abroad."

But there is more than a practical side to the case for foreign languages, Miss Thompson noted, and said: "We do a lot of talking about international understanding, but here is a perfect opportunity for letting the child participate in a foreign culture by breaking down the barrier of language."

The Hartford Times
September 30, 1957

Along with the development of the Audio-Lingual method and its trials in the public schools in Glastonbury came a massive nationwide training effort for language teachers. This methodology became so prominent that it dominated language teaching until the late 1970s and also became a predominant philosophy for language teaching in other countries.

Although for the last fifteen years the Audio-Lingual Methodology has been looked upon in disfavor by educators because of its reliance on drills and rote memorization, the underlying educational reason for the Audio-Lingual Method—the need for Americans to *speak* other languages—is the one lasting characteristic that has helped to maintain the Glastonbury foreign language program. In order for Glastonbury's language program to be sustained when many others were cut back or totally eliminated in the 1970s, the townspeople—the policy makers and the voters—had to see that there was something of true value in it.

Why a Long Sequence of Study?

The question for education reformers today is, what are the *essential elements* that the public must perceive in order for them to support a language program over such a long period of time? Conversations with townspeople and qualitative research with students and graduates indicate that the single greatest ingredient for maintaining the supportive attitude about the language program is that students who graduate from the program are able to use their language knowledge in later life. Success breeds success. The momentum to maintain the language program and expand it has come from a community whose children and grandchildren have returned to Glastonbury, talking about the tremendous preparation they had in the program to think, read, write, and speak in another language.

Just by playing a tape recorder under the bed at night one is not going to miraculously absorb Serbo-Croatian or even French.

Why is it that Glastonbury students can speak and use a language, while students from some other school districts find that they really can't? It isn't as simple as the airline magazines would have one believe. Just by playing a tape recorder under the bed at night one is not going to miraculously absorb Serbo-Croatian or even French. The United States Foreign Service and Department of State have twenty-five years of

The Chaos of Outer Space

Behold the beeping barking Muttnik
Hot on the trail of its cousin Sputnik
While scientists record the sound
Of a tired, wired Siberian hound
The first of this earthbound populace
To achieve the calm of outer space.
What thinks his canine brain up there
900 hundred miles from a breath of air
As he looks upon his Russian masters
Trying to avoid internal disasters.
And upon the Americans feverish race
To shatter this calm of outer space?
"Krushchev may launch a rocket soon
with Zhukov inside,
It'll speed to the moon
And explode in the blaze of a fiery
red star.
Commemorating the fall of the czar."
Thus muses dog from his vantage place
There in the calm of outer space
"Ike's lost his grip on the G.O.P.
French governments fall like leaves
from a tree
Nations practice segregation
Keep tabs of each other through
infiltration
This is world that's lost its grace
How nice, this calm of outer space"
"Perhaps," says the dog,
"While I'm up here,
Transmitting from the ionosphere,
I can persuade man to build an ark,
Fill it with humans and then embark
With three-stage rockets fixed on
its base
Into this calm of outer space!
Russia could supply the power
(The U.S. could send Eisenhower).
Then two by two, in rocket attire
Would follow humans with one desire:
To escape the world of the common-
place
And live in the calm of outer space,
There'd be an organized man in flan-
nel dress,
A group representing togetherness.
A Beta could come for fraternity,
And chapel for eternity...
Why, even the student could embrace
Peace in this calm of outer space.
They'd bring Harvard University for
cultural diversity,
But could this satellite Utopia
eliminate adversity?
Can man really find his freedom here
beyond the stars,
Cultivate Elysian fields only 50 miles
from Mars?
Or might this arkload of human race
Just result in the chaos of outer
space...?"

Glastonbury Citizen
November 21, 1957

research on the length of time it takes Americans to become proficient in another language. The ability to function beyond the tourist level in a language—to be able to communicate with a business partner or to negotiate a contract—takes thousands of hours of contact in French or Spanish and four to five times that much time in Russian, Mandarin, Japanese, or Arabic. It is no wonder that the average high school student who has had only about two hundred contact hours (usually in a European language) can't say much by the time they graduate from high school.

Students graduating from schools where they *do* have the opportunity to study a language over a long period of time recognize that their skills have gotten better and better as they have studied the language. Although they might reflect on their elementary experience as being simplistic, they can say with some certainty that without that

If this approach to language learning has worked so well in Glastonbury, why aren't other districts doing the same?

experience, they would have had no foundation upon which to build in junior and senior high school. When Glastonbury students go on to college, many place into third year courses and some place out of the undergraduate language sequence altogether. These are not all academically remarkable students. These are students who have had the opportunity to cultivate and nurture their language skills in a sequential fashion beginning in primary school.

Obstacles

If this approach to language learning has worked so well in Glastonbury, why aren't other districts doing the same? Some districts and some states are working to expand programs into the early grades. However, interviews with language supervisors, principals, and school superintendents seem to indicate that there are major obstacles: in particular, staffing, teacher training, and articulation—sequential planning from level to level. When the middle school or the high school teachers are not trained to properly receive elementary youngsters with a strong foreign language base, these students are thrust into classrooms where the teachers cannot build upon their students' knowledge, yielding frustration and failure on both sides. Also, some elementary students go into junior high and high school programs where they are in classes with beginning language students. Teachers teach to the beginning level and the students who have developed a strong language base in the elementary and middle grades are left to sit and become turned off.

This past April, I visited all the elementary schools in Glastonbury to explain the choices for foreign language at grade six. Every year for the last five years, I have found students more and more adamant about their desire to study more than one language at a time. At Buttonball Lane School this year, after I finished talking about the program at the sixth grade level, one student raised his hand and said, "You mean we can't take Spanish and French in sixth grade?" I explained that no, the schedule was so crowded that in fact we were fortunate to be able to have a daily class in one language. He raised his hand again and said, "If we can't take French and Spanish at the same time, when can we add Japanese?" A couple of other students asked about the opportunity to begin Mandarin Chinese. When I told them they would have to wait until high school to begin Japanese, they were so disappointed.

— Christine Brown, 1995

Eastbury Elementary School students explain why they want to study a foreign language 1995:

I think it is important to learn another language because for one thing, if I go somewhere where people speak Spanish, I would need to know the language. And I enjoy learning many languages. Also, Spanish sounds like it would be a good language to learn.

— Marcos Mogensen

I think learning another language is very important and helpful. If you know a foreign language, you can also learn a lot about the country, people, and history of the language. You might go there some day. You are able to have a pen pal that you can communicate in that language with. Many different languages are spoken here in the U.S. so it is very handy to know at least one.

— Caitlin Cancellieri

I think it is important to learn a language. One reason is when you visit a country you will be able to talk to people. Another is if you don't know a language you may not be able to go to the college of your choice.

— Hans Muden

When you go to different places where they speak different languages it is convenient to know a different language so that you can socialize with the people around you.

— Cristina Brisee

Essential Elements for Success

In many school districts, curriculum supervisors especially for foreign languages do not exist. Language study, rare in the elementary grades, does not get the attention that it needs from elementary school principals, most of whom have never studied a foreign language. For the last forty years the Glastonbury program had the unique and consistent oversight of a foreign language specialist from grades three through twelve.

In an effort to be more interdisciplinary and encourage more site-based management, the curriculum specialist has formed partnerships with the administrators in the district's schools, and the oversight of the language program is done by a team. The language program coordinator and the elementary principal hire, supervise, and evaluate teachers. This partnership has resulted in a stronger language program at the elementary level, for the curriculum supervisor has a thorough understanding of the needs of each school and the elementary principals have a greater knowledge of how to hire and supervise language teachers.

A pillar of the Glastonbury curriculum has been coordination of the program in grades three through twelve.

Another important element of the Glastonbury elementary and middle school program is that the language teachers in the elementary grades are solicited on the basis of both their language competence *and* their understanding of the broader curriculum at the elementary levels. Elementary teachers in Glastonbury are a combination of elementary classroom teacher and foreign language teacher. Because they feel comfortable in the elementary school environment, they form good relationships with the other classroom teachers and serve as general resources to the broader elementary school curriculum, especially in social studies. Glastonbury's elementary language teachers teach an average of ten classes a day in the elementary grades. They are usually assigned to only one school, so they become part of the total school staff, as opposed to just being itinerant teachers who don't have a chance to build relationships or rapport in the school, since they report to someone at the central office, not the school principal.

Another pillar of the Glastonbury curriculum has been coordination of the program in grades three through twelve. Language teachers from all grade levels meet monthly to discuss district-wide events and priorities. The curriculum is reviewed with

One of my husband's colleagues invited us to the Russian Embassy in Washington to meet the officer who would help President Clinton prepare for the Moscow Summit. He invited us to go because he knew we had such an interest in Russian, developed as a result of our daughter studying Russian, going to the former Soviet Union, and because we had hosted Russian students in our home. I was fortunate to sit next to two aides and tell them about our Russian program and talk with them about their views of the United States. It was a wonderful experience that we credit to the foreign language program in Glastonbury.

Blakes Lloyd, parent of two Glastonbury foreign language students

I am an unlikely person to be standing here advocating the learning of foreign languages. I grew up on a farm in Iowa. No incentive existed to learn a foreign language; in fact, the prevailing social pressures were exactly the opposite. One of my close childhood friends was the son of German immigrants. He refused to learn German at home and was visibly embarrassed by his parents' German accents.

I first became acutely aware of the need for foreign language fluency as a Peace Corps volunteer in India, at the age of nineteen. That is when I found that being in a foreign country whose language you do not read, understand, or speak is akin to being illiterate, deaf, and mute, all at the same time. To suffer from all three afflictions simultaneously puts you at a great disadvantage. It makes it next to impossible to execute business activities competently and competitively. I was forced to quickly become literate, restore my ability to hear and speak—Hindustani, in this case—and it opened up a whole new world for me.

For eighteen years, I have been with Arbor Acres, headquartered in Glastonbury. Arbor Acres breeds chickens and turkeys. We operate joint venture companies in Japan, China, Hungary, Thailand, and Taiwan, have wholly-owned operations in Zambia and Holland, and have franchised companies in Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, and the Philippines. All of our senior and middle managers and technicians in our international operations are either bi-, tri-, or quadrilingual. Seventeen different languages are spoken by our International Management Team here in Glastonbury.

I do not believe that we will be able to balance our trade deficit and begin sustainable upsizing until we become globally literate and educated world citizens. We are back to the basic truth of how important education is. In the global business world we now live in, how can we know how to be the best at designing, manufacturing, producing, and marketing and servicing a product for China, for instance, if you do not understand Chinese culture, and Mandarin? Usable knowledge of other cultures cannot be achieved without the use of other languages. The language of a culture is the key that opens the door to that culture.

Remarks by James D. Nelson, CEO, Arbor Acres Farm, Inc. at a November 1994 town meeting in Glastonbury on the subject of foreign languages.

cross representation from all levels of language instruction and includes community members, classroom teachers and administrators from other disciplines. All textbook selection and curriculum design is undertaken by teachers representing elementary, middle, and high school. Most recently, in an effort to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented along national, state, and local curriculum guidelines, the teachers have been writing collaborative departmental examinations for grades five through twelve. This year for the first time, teachers will create a common scoring mechanism for grading student examinations. In these exams, students will listen to native speakers in real life situations, read articles from authentic sources, and write in response to a real life event or activity. The teacher will conduct speaking interviews with students at all levels. Also this year for the first time, teachers will exchange classes to interview students to ensure a common grading standard. Prior to and following testing, teachers will meet to make sure the test represents advancing skills and that themes used at one level are not repeated at another. This type of planning ensures that students will move from level to level and build on skills rather than just repeating low level skills at every stage of instruction. The testing will also provide the students with a match between what the curriculum promised and what they actually learned.

All curriculum documents developed for each grade level are shared at parent open houses and with students at the beginning of every school year. Teachers explain to students that the skills they will be learning and the topics that they will be covering are not necessarily the same skills and topics reflected in their textbook—the textbook is only one tool to meet the systemwide goals. If students move into the more advanced levels of language, no single textbook can provide them with all they will need to become more proficient speakers of the language.

Testing provides students a match between what the curriculum promised and what they actually learned.

By sharing the curriculum and testing at the end of every level with the students, parents, and all the teachers, we hope that the program will be well-articulated and that students can see their own progress. To help students see the great progress they have made from the elementary school through the high school, we are using portfolio assessment that includes long-term documentation of student work through projects, videos, audio tapes, and writing samples. We hope that in the near future we will be able to keep these student samples in an electronic portfolio, and students will be able

When I started college, I placed into the fourth semester Russian course—the professor was surprised to see a freshman in that class. The other students were amazed that I had been able to start Russian in the seventh grade on top of my Spanish. Of all the students in the class, I was the only one from a public school—everyone else was from a private school, and I was the youngest. I consistently had the highest grade in the class, which I attribute to the fact that I was able to study so much more foreign language before I came to college. In Spanish, I placed into the seventh semester course. It's been great for me—there are many native speakers of Spanish in the class, and I have been forced to carry on conversations about literature totally in Spanish. I feel almost as comfortable speaking Spanish now as speaking English, unless it is a topic I don't know anything about.

Matthew Stowe, 1993 graduate. Matt began Spanish in third grade and Russian in seventh.

Studying Russian in grammar school was more than just another class for me. Literally my entire life has been shaped by that study. To highlight a few of the direct results: I spent a month in Ukraine, USSR, where I made friends with whom I still keep in touch. Four years later, I became interested in Georgetown University because of their Russian program and was accepted because of the experience I had already acquired in the language. I have spent the last nine months studying in Russia and have an internship at TIME magazine in Moscow.

Erin Doyle is a recent graduate of Glastonbury High School

I think there is a strong impact of learning a second language on learning in general. I am ashamed to say as a former Special Education teacher that I would not have thought about the impact of foreign language because my students traditionally and regrettably would not have taken a foreign language. We have several students right now who are mainstreamed into Spanish but who have substantial special education needs. One has Aspergers' syndrome, a form of autism. When he entered school he didn't talk at all. We thought perhaps he was mute. He has been taking Spanish since the third grade, and one of the first people he ever spoke to was Ida Shea, his Spanish teacher. Today he participates actively in Spanish class.

Patricia DaSilva, Principal, Buttonball Lane School , 1995

to present these portfolios for placement at the college and university level in addition to—or in place of—taking the college placement test. College placement tests are generally not based upon what students know and are able to do in schools; they are devised by college level professors with very little experience at the K-12 level. We also hope that, by presenting these professors with a K-12 portfolio, the college level language sequences will be designed to further students' mastery of a language and not drearily repeat low level material that they have already mastered.

The language director reviews the K-12 Social Studies curriculum; the Social Studies Director reviews the language program.

In addition to a communication-oriented curriculum, Glastonbury students have the opportunity to participate in a number of challenging exchange programs. Through the United States Information Agency and the State of Connecticut, Russian language students annually travel to Russia for a three-week stay at a sister school in St. Petersburg. This year for the first time three teachers from other disciplines—history and English—as well as the school media specialist, accompanied the Russian language teacher on the exchange program to St. Petersburg. By planning these collaborative endeavors, students are able to benefit from the expertise of teachers outside the language department and the language teachers are appreciated for the depth and breadth of their knowledge.

Interdisciplinary Focus

In Glastonbury, the study of language and culture is not confined to the language program. Recently, the language director served on the review of the K-12 Social Studies curriculum; in turn, the Social Studies Director served on the review of the language program. As a result, the foreign language curriculum topics are organized so that they parallel topics being presented in Social Studies. In the elementary grades, the new History-Social Studies framework emphasizes particular world areas at different grade levels. The elementary school Spanish teachers correlate the thematic topics they present with the topics presented in Social Studies at approximately the same time of year. Second graders, for example, study Mexico in their Social Studies curriculum and the Spanish teacher focuses on the country of Mexico for the entire second grade. At grade six, where world geography becomes the primary focus of the Social Studies curriculum, students

Dear Editor:

There is a proposal currently before the parents of Glastonbury that the Russian language be taught our seventh graders. For what purpose—cultural, sociological, or even practical?

The study of French, Spanish, even Italian or German is commendable. The first three, apart from any practical consideration, for example, that they are spoken by large segments of adopted Americans, as well as in many countries accessible to American travelers, are musical, and add much to the poetry of living. No such excuse can be made for Russian. Even German, guttural though it is, has more grace.

As for language alone adding to our understanding of a remote and largely unapproachable people, why not rather a comprehensive course in Russian and Far East history? The history of Russia is largely unknown. It is replete with color, pathos and tragedy, but little of this could ever emerge from the mere study of a language.

In today's uneasy world, which we must educate our children to try to understand, it would seem the greatest need, in the upper grades, is the intelligent evaluation of fast-moving global events, together with understanding, if possible, of the conditions that may have caused them.

Yours truly,
(Mrs.) Joseph V. Dionne
Glastonbury Citizen
July 24, 1958

In my present position, I use Russian on a daily basis. I truly think that Americans are the most linguistically inept people operating in international trade circles. Our lack of language skills cripples our attempts to export. We need to follow the European practice of starting students on at least two foreign languages beginning in elementary school and we need to be making a big commitment to Japanese, Chinese, and Russian.

Glastonbury High School students are a major part of Russian joint ventures. Young people are having a very high impact on what is happening in joint ventures today because they can't find jobs in the United States. There is a twenty-three-year-old, Cindy Pitt, running Federal Express right now. She's a graduate of Glastonbury High School, and has a fantastic job in Russia that she couldn't have gotten without Russian language skills.

Certainly, studying French in elementary school contributed to the kind of life I lead and job that I hold today. Without it, I wouldn't have ever been drawn to Russian in middle school. I certainly would never have gone to Russia had I not studied the language in Glastonbury.

There are very few Russian-capable officers in the Commerce Department. I hadn't studied Russian for sixteen years, since I left Glastonbury High School, yet when I was tested, I still had some facility in the language, and with an intensive four-month immersion in Russian, my skills came right back. That couldn't have happened if I hadn't had that long sequence of Russian before college.

Richard Steffans is Commercial Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, 1995.

in French and Spanish look at the entire world, with special emphasis on areas where the languages are spoken. In grade seven, students in French, Spanish, and Russian study the role of their respective countries in coordination with the time period being studied in world history. The same happens in the study of U.S. History: in grades eight and ten, where U.S. History is the focus, the role of immigrants in the development of the history of the United States is emphasized for the entire year. At the high school level, foreign language teachers emphasize culture and history topics about Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe in their study of French, Spanish, and Russian. Certainly the study of Latin is correlated with the study of the ancient world at the high school level. Unfortunately, teachers are rarely given common planning time across disciplines, although this would be a natural outgrowth of the braiding of the two curricular areas.

Similar efforts at curriculum "meshing" are going on with English and Science. Through these types of connections and the interdisciplinary focus on exchange programs, students begin to see the need to apply other content in their learning of a language. They realize that if they are to be proficient speakers of the language, they must have some meaningful information to communicate with people in communities both at home and abroad.

Community Commitment

As important as curricular understanding and unification are both within the foreign language program and across disciplines, it is also vital to communicate to the public that these activities are occurring in the schools so that the public continues to be an advocate for language programs. In the elementary school we invite parents to participate in classes during National Foreign Language Week. During these special lessons classrooms are jammed with parents and grandparents who are delighted to see young children speaking and using the language. Additionally, all elementary school newsletters contain a weekly column on what is happening in the language classroom.

Classrooms are jammed with parents and grandparents delighted to see young children speaking and using the language.

Because many parents have not studied a language at the elementary grades, they are not sure what is possible, so our elementary teachers keep them apprised of classroom activities and ways of working with their children at home to use the language. For

Back in the U.S.S.R., but not Forgotten

They rocked to Bon Jovi. They shopped for jeans at Bob's. They ate pizza for dinner.

At first glance, the 12 Soviet high school students who visited from L'vov, a Ukrainian city of 850,000, looked like any other group of teenagers in America. But the students, just by being in town for three weeks, led Glastonbury students and town residents to a simple conclusion: They have more in common than they realized.

"The human spirit is the same," said Christine L. Brown, director of foreign languages for Glastonbury schools. "The hopes and the dreams for professionalism and exciting jobs are the same. It's like Oksana Novik kept saying,`Students are students, kids are kids.'" Novik is the Soviet students' English language teacher.

What is unique about the program is that for the first time, Soviet and American high school students are spending their time not in isolated dormitories, but in private homes with families as their host. The program grew out of an agreement signed by President Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev during the Moscow summit last May.

Glastonbury High School, known for its pioneer Russian language program, was chosen as one of 30 schools in the nation to participate. On Saturday, 12 Glastonbury students and their Russian language teacher, Lynne Campbell, will board a plane for the Soviet Union, where they will spend the next month touring Moscow and Leningrad and going to school with their new Soviet friends in L'vov.

The program is scheduled to pair new groups of students from the same communities for at least two more years.

The effects of the "young ambassadors" will eventually be felt throughout the community, said Lisa Garza, an official with the U.S.-U.S.S.R. High School Academic Partnership Program in Washington, D.C.

"It's like throwing a rock in the pond," Brown said. "The circle gets bigger and bigger." "Something happened. Something changed," Adel Lukyanova, assistant principal of School No. 6 in Moscow, said of other Soviet students who have returned from U.S. exchange visits.

Hartford Times
April 1989

students that are new to the district a parent packet of material, including an audio tape, is made available so that the parent can help their child enter the curriculum. In grades six through twelve we provide information through school newsletters and two local newspapers that serve the community. The language teachers have as an annual goal publicizing the activities that involve students.

Parents as Advocates

Parents are invited to Foreign Language Week celebrations that draw crowds of between five and eight hundred people. Students from every level perform at these events so parents can see the potential progression of their child's skills throughout the grades. As was mentioned earlier, parents and community members serve as representatives on curriculum studies and on the development of school policies that relate to the language program, such as a recently adopted International Travel Policy. Further, parent orientation creates many advocates for the language program by involving parents in the preparation for exchange programs and their children's travel abroad. We talk with them while their children are gone about the cross-cultural and linguistic issues that arise in foreign travel and how they can be dealt with in a positive manner. And, while it is important that our students travel abroad, it is also very important that we bring students from other countries to stay with families in Glastonbury. Annually, we host foreign exchange students as well as students from both of our official exchange schools in St. Petersburg, Russia and Morelia, Mexico. These host parents serve as advocates of the program long after their children have graduated from our high school.

Conclusion

Certainly the language program has been supported by the parent community over the years. However, support is neither certain nor automatic. The teachers and the curriculum director continually work to maintain a high level of community involvement. From the parent open houses to community-wide international celebrations, something is always taking place that involves students and their families. Students also organize and control a number of events. After school clubs in grades six through twelve, language contests, and immersion experiences, are all partially planned by students. As the students continue to love learning languages, they convince others that it is important to study hard and do well in their language classes. Finally, the success of the program is testimony to the outstanding program staff, who love languages themselves, and who know how learning a language can change one's life forever.

We Will Remember You... ***L'vov students were in America, and now—a return visit***

Within just three minutes of landing at the Hartford airport, the students had already left. The principal of L'vov school #76, Vasiliy N. Goryn, held his head. "What's going to happen?" They tried to calm Vasiliy down. "Nothing will happen. Tomorrow you'll see your students in school." (They would live with families.) "And now they're going to relax." Goryn, smiling, was taken by car, first by highway, then through a small, green town, with individual homes everywhere. He was taken to the house where he would live.

I don't have to explain that Vasiliy Nikolaevich did not sleep that night, no matter how friendly his hosts were, no matter how comfortable his room was. He was too excited: how did the students get settled? How are they behaving? Are they all healthy?At school the next morning, Vasiliy saw all twelve of his tenth graders and teacher Oksana Novik, all happy and smiling. He calmed down. Yes, in the American town of Glastonbury, Connecticut, the L'vovians were greeted warmly.

"Vasiliy Nikolaevich, did the trip turn out to be useful for you?" "More than I could have expected. Not only because I personally got to know the American system of education, but also because the students became familiar with it, and having returned, they've told their friends about it.

At School #76 in a room used temporarily by the American students, it seemed that chaos ruled. Some students were sitting on the couches, some on the floor. But it was worth it to approach the kids—there was complete seriousness and concentration.

I looked at the American and Soviet kids. They are approximately the same age, and have similar complexions. And I thought, if you didn't know who was who, you wouldn't figure it out. They're even dressed similarly, except that the Americans have more Lenin pins on their jackets.

I believe that the Americans' opinions of our country have changed. And I hope very much that this increased interest will not burn out with time. I hope that in their remaining time (they're in Leningrad now) they will learn more about the USSR, and that they'll remember not only the half-empty stores and lines, which, unfortunately, they paid attention to, but also the many virtues of our republic and our country. I hope the they will remember not only the fact that the Soviet kids lived in America in large homes—no one was cramped for living space—while in L'vov they were placed in two-and three-room apartments. Despite the fact that the whole family lived in one or two rooms, the guest was offered a separate room.

Of course, they have noticed our hospitality and friendliness, our desire to talk about the same things—things that bring together simple people from all over the planet: about the struggle for peace; about the desire to not harm this large home of ours—Earth; and about the creative possibilities of man. At all kinds of meetings in L'vov, the conversation was often about how we want to live better, fuller, brighter, and this is why we've seized perestroika. And, of course, we believe in it. This is probably why we are interesting to the world, and so the students from Glastonbury want to come back again to see the many changes that we who live here are already noticing.

From an article in the L'vov Pravda, April 21, 1989

Translated into English by the American and Russian students, with assistance from their teacher in L'vov.

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